HIST 342

HERESY AND AUTHORITY IN MEDIEVAL EUROPE

– A Seminar –

(3 credit hours)

Prof. David Collins, S. J.

** COURSE SYLLABUS **

SPRING 2013

Course Description:

- This seminar explores the sources for Christian dissenting movements in medieval and early modern Europe, including the ways that orthodox Christianity responded – persuasion, coercion, repression, and inquisition. Relying heavily on primary materials (in translation), we will examine the legal and theological foundations of heresy inquisition, the methods and procedures employed, the movements and offenses pursued, and the experiences and testimonies of men and women involved in these proceedings.

- Focusing on “popular” heresies in Europe (and later in its colonial dominions), we will address issues such as religious conformity and social control; the changing nature of orthodoxy and heterodoxy; the efficacy of evangelization and the sincerity of conversion; race, gender, class, and cultural

Figure 1. “Religion Triumphs over Heresy and Hatred” (1695), Tomb of St Ignatius Loyola, Il Gesu, Rome.
dynamics; and the use of inquisition records as a window onto popular beliefs and practices.

- This course is a Doyle Seminar, part of the Doyle Engaging Difference Program, a new campus-wide curricular initiative, and gives faculty the opportunity to enhance the student research component of upper-level seminars that address questions of national, social, cultural, religious, moral, and other forms of difference. The Doyle seminars are intended to deepen student learning about diversity and difference through enhanced research opportunities, interaction with thought leaders, and dialogue with the Georgetown community and beyond.

- **GOALS:**
  - The principal goal of this course will be acquiring the background and techniques needed to understand and interpret original sources on dissent and its repression in the Middle Ages.
  - Each student will also produce an original research paper on some aspect of medieval dissent or its repression, using original sources and showings control of modern scholarly literature on the topic.

- **PRE-REQUISITES.** There are no prerequisites for this course, which is constructed to accommodate students with a variety of academic backgrounds. Thus, while a background in pre-modern western history will be an advantage, so too will background in political science, theology, and literature. Our common discussions and shared researching greatly benefit from the diverse backgrounds in the humanities, natural and social sciences, and theology that students bring to the class. A healthy ability to suspend disbelief, at least initially, and enter sympathetically into the seemingly irrational worlds of other times, places, and cultures is also to everyone’s advantage.
Class Organization: HIST 342 meets twice a week for seventy-five minutes. In the format of a seminar and under the leadership of seminar participants, we will discuss as a class assigned historical documents on a particular topic. Attendance is obligatory.

Course Reading.

- General principles
  - The workload for this course follows the general principle of 2 hours of preparation for every hour in class. This works out to a 6 hour-per-week average of preparation for HIST 342. Naturally, if you’re preparing a presentation or writing a paper it will be little higher.
  - Reading assignments are occasionally long and dense, sometimes short and dense ... and almost always odd. Read carefully, slowly, and multiple times.
  - The reading schedule is in a separate document.

- Required Books. These books will be available at the Leavey bookstore. All but the Mayer volume will also likely be found second-hand online, for which I recommend www.abebooks.com. The Peters book we will need from the very beginning of the semester.

- Online Readings. Additional primary and secondary materials, including texts and other electronic resources, available on “Blackboard” for this course.

**Evaluations:**

- Class Participation (26%)
  - Active participation in twice-weekly Discussions.
  - Role as discussion facilitator.

- Short Writing Exercises (24%): 2 pp ea., three of these, with the possibility of a fourth at the student’s discretion, are due through the semester. The papers are tight, focused analyses of aspects of the primary material, and are intended both to facilitate class discussions and train the students in analytical skills necessary for the research paper. See separate instructions on Blackboard.

- Research Paper (50%): a twenty-page research paper on a topic of the student’s choice in consultation with the instructor and relevant to the subject of the seminar, historically conscious, and analytical. A complete draft is due in early April; the final draft, at the end of the semester. See separate instructions on Blackboard.

**Topics (schedule attached):**

- What’s Heresy
- The First Heresiarchs
- Catharism
- Repression and Inquisition
- Later Medieval Heresies: Wycliffites, Hussites, etc.
- Reformation and Inquisition: Rome
- Reformation and Inquisition: Geneva
- The Rise of the State and Inquisition: Spain
- Colonials and Inquisition: Americas
- The Legacy of the Inquisitions: Enlightenment
- The Legacy of the Inquisitions: Popular Culture in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries

Figure 4. Lippi, The Triumph of St. Thomas over the Heretics (here: Arius, Apollinaris, and Averoes), 1490